

Smoking, giving up

This information is intended only as a guide to help you give up smoking. It is not intended to replace medical advice.

This fact sheet, although not exhaustive, aims to offer ways of finding help from health professionals, local services or national organisations about giving up smoking.

Stopping smoking is not easy & success will depend on your own motivation & willingness to succeed. We hope that the following hints & contacts will help.

Why smoke?

Most people know that smoking is bad for their health. Why people smoke is actually a complicated mixture of physical and emotional dependence. The physical reasons are:

- Nicotine in tobacco is highly addictive.
- Nicotine reaches the brain within 10 seconds and produces a pleasant 'buzz'.
- Nicotine levels fall shortly after completing a cigarette; smokers experience craving, irritability and restlessness and that's when the next cigarette is needed.

The emotional reasons people smoke vary from person to person. Most smokers have smoked since their teenage years and cigarettes are part of their life.

Most smokers say they feel less anxious when they smoke & use smoking as a way of coping with the stresses & strains of life.

Understanding the reasons why you smoke may help you prepare to give up.

Why stop?

- It is never too late to give up smoking, the benefits of quitting start immediately.
- Your blood pressure and heart rate return to normal.
- Your smell and taste will improve.
- Breathing gets easier.
- Energy increases.
- Risks of smoking related diseases start to fall.
- If you have a smokers' cough, this will improve.

What will happen when I stop smoking?

Of course it is not easy to give up smoking but knowing what to expect may help.

- Cravings - these can be uncomfortable & painful but may lessen over time.
- Coughing may initially increase as the lungs clear out accumulated mucus. This will pass.
- Bowel upsets are possible, but only temporary.
- Some dizziness may be felt and sleep may be disturbed in the first few weeks.
- Weight gain - some people put on weight following stopping smoking. Usually, this is due to increased food intake to help cope with the cravings for cigarettes. Developing a healthy eating habit may help to avoid this.

Tips for preparing to stop

- Keep a smoking diary for a few days to identify when and why you smoke. Spend some time thinking about what you might do instead at those times.
- Tell friends and family when you are stopping so they can support you.
- Rewards – use the money you save on cigarettes to reward yourself.
- Decide on a quit day and stick to it.
- Remove all reminders of smoking such as ashtrays, lighters etc.
- Throw away all remaining cigarettes.
- Think of ways of coping with the physical side effects of stopping.
- Consider a suitable form of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT); patches, gum, nasal spray, tablets or inhalers. These are all available on prescription. Talk to your GP.
- Enrol in a local smoking clinic for additional information and mutual support. Details of how to find one local to you, will be at the end of this fact sheet.

Stopping & Staying Stopped

Stick to your quit day and then take it a day at a time. Getting through the first few days can be the hardest. Congratulate yourself each day that you manage to stay stopped. Each day you stay stopped you are a step closer to being a non-smoker. So remember:

- Try to stay positive, you can achieve this if you really want to.
- Keep busy, this will help take your mind off smoking.
- Learn to relax and deal with stress.
- Take some exercise to keep your mind off smoking.
- Don't be tempted if offered cigarettes by friends who smoke.
- Don't fall into the trap of thinking that "one won't hurt".

- Don't give-in, one cigarette can undo all your hard work.
- It can help if you try to alter your daily routine.
- When times are hard pick up the phone & call a help line number given below.

If you do have a cigarette don't give up on giving up. Many people give up several times before stopping for good. Make tomorrow the day you stop again. Think about why you had that cigarette, so you can avoid the same situation in the future.

Remember although you are the only one who can give up smoking there are plenty of people who want to help you.

Below we have listed some of the services that are available to you:

GP [your family doctor]	You may want further general advice about giving up smoking. Your GP can advise about which form of Nicotine Replacement Therapy may help. This is now available on prescription.	Your GP's telephone number:
NHS Smoking Helpline	Providing free advice, group support, counselling & information. Trained counsellors available. Call for details of a clinic near you. Pregnant smokers helpline:	NHS Smoking Helpline Daily 7am - 11pm 0800 169 0169 www.smokefree.nhs.uk 0800 169 9169 Daily 12noon - 9pm
Quit	Offers telephone helpline & information, advice and counselling to any smoker who wants to stop.	0800 00 22 00 Mon - Sun 9am - 9pm www.quit.org.uk
Action on Smoking & Health 102-108 Clifton St London EC2A 4HW	An independent charity, which aims to discourage smoking and co-ordinate action to combat smoking related diseases.	www.ash.org.uk